

SAN FRANCISCO BAY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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TO: Design Review Board Members

FROM: Lawrence J. Goldzband, Executive Director (415/352-3653; lgoldzband@bcdc.ca.gov)
Ellen Miramontes, Bay Design Analyst (415/352-3643; ellenm@bcdc.ca.gov)

SUBJECT: Draft Minutes of May 5, 2014 BCDP Design Review Board Meeting

1. **Call to Order and Attendance.** The Design Review Board's Chair, John Kriken, called the meeting to order at approximately 6:10 p.m. Other Design Review Board (DRB) members in attendance included Vice Chair Steve Thompson, Karen Alschuler, Roger Leventhal, Jacinta McCann (reviewed Benicia Waterfront Park and recused herself for Crane Cove Park), Stefan Pellegrini (reviewed Crane Cove Park and recused himself for Benicia Waterfront Park) and Gary Strang. BCDP staff in attendance included Bob Batha, Erik Buehmann, Ellie Knecht, and Ellen Miramontes. The Port's Waterfront Design Advisory Committee (WDAC) members in attendance for the review of Crane Cove Park included Chair Dan Hodapp, David Alumbaugh, Boris Dramov, Marsha Maytum and Kathrin Moore.

2. **Approval of Draft Minutes for the April 7, 2014 Meeting.** The Board approved the minutes with no revisions.

3. **Crane Cove Park, Port of San Francisco Pier 70, City and County of San Francisco. (Fourth Pre-Application Review)** The Design Review Board and the Port's Waterfront Design Advisory Committee jointly conducted a fourth pre-application review of a proposal by the Port of San Francisco to construct an approximately nine-acre public park at Pier 70. The review covered the first phase of the proposed park. The project includes construction of a multi-use park within the footprint of the area used for historic ship building and repair operations. Within the Commission's Bay and 100-foot shoreline band jurisdiction, the park elements would include open lawn areas, gardens, seating and picnic areas, playgrounds, facilities serving non-motorized small boats, and public art.

a. **Staff Presentation.** Erik Buehmann introduced the project and the issues identified in the staff report, which included: physical access, visual access, park amenities, water access and sea level rise.

b. **Project Presentation.** David Beaupre, Project Manager with the Port of San Francisco, then provided an overview of the project including the site context, park phasing and described how the project has evolved and changed during the course of the Board and Committee's reviews. Scott Fenical, a Coastal Engineer with Coastal and Harbor Engineers, provided an in-depth review of the following coastal engineering aspects of the project: storm wave analysis,



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propeller wash modeling, sedimentation analysis and sediment transport model validation. Patricia Fonseca, with AECOM, presented the project's first phase and described how the five issues raised by the Board at their last review had been addressed. James Haigstreeter, with AECOM, presented the alternative designs for the Crane Plaza located at Slipway 4 and 19th Street in great detail.

c. **Board Questions.** The Board and Committee members asked several questions.

Mr. Leventhal asked for further clarification on the proposed source and size of the sand for use at the beach. He asked that the San Francisco City Datum be converted to NAVD 88 for ease of understanding and also asked for more information on sea level rise. Ms. Fonseca explained that the beach would be comprised of sand in the middle, aggregate along the edges and rip rap beyond this. She also explained that the park is being designed to accept periodic flooding over time and AECOM has researched sea level rise impacts up to the year 2100.

Ms. Alschuler asked for more information on the "utility racks." Mr. Beaupre explained that they run along Slipway 4, are an existing contributing historic resource and will remain a part of the design concept and project.

Ms. Alschuler asked for clarification regarding grading in Option 2 of Crane Plaza. Ms. Fonseca explained that the slope is just under 5 % and generally follows the grade of the street. Ms. Alschuler also asked about the entry into the park in the northern area and Mr. Beaupre explained the proposed circulation options in this area.

Ms. Maytum asked about the general security plan for the park and specifically wanted to understand the boundaries between the park and The Ramp Restaurant. Mr. Beaupre responded that there is no plan currently to gate the park although that would be possible in the future if needed. He explained that the Port's general policy is that their parks are open sunrise to one hour after sunset. He also clarified that there would not be any fence or barrier between the park and The Ramp Restaurant.

Ms. Maytum asked about security and access for the cranes. Mr. Beaupre explained that the cranes would be seismically safe although no access would be allowed on them and that the existing steps on them would either be removed or fenced off.

Mr. Alumbaugh asked what will occur at the end of Slipway 4 and whether people will be encouraged to use it or not. Mr. Beaupre explained that anything below the Mean High Tide will present a "slip and fall" hazard and, as such, they are looking at ways to discourage and restrict access through the placement of the keel blocks rather than using fences and chains.

Mr. Alumbaugh also asked for clarification regarding the proposed design for the edge of the park at Illinois Street. Mr. Beaupre explained that the Illinois Street fence will stay in its current location, a 12-15 foot wide sidewalk will sit to the east of it and the adjacent lawn area will meet the grade of this sidewalk.

Mr. Thompson asked how the park will be funded and who will maintain it. Mr. Beaupre explained that money from 2008 and 2012 General Obligation Bonds will be used and that the Port is committed to maintain the park. The park is being designed to be as sustainable, in terms of maintenance, as possible while also responding to community desires.

Mr. Strang asked how the play area was decided upon and what the surface material would consist of. Mr. Beaupre explained that through the course of many community meetings, a play area had always been expressed as a strong community desire. He further explained that it seemed ideal to place the play area in this more protected area adjacent to the sandy beach and The Ramp Restaurant. Ms. Fonseca explained that it was envisioned that the play area would have a rubber surface material.

Mr. Pellegrini asked for further clarification on the two options for the Crane Plaza. Mr. Beaupre explained the grading differences between the two options: one option gradually slopes according to the street grade and the other option maintains a fairly flat plaza with steps then entering the Slipway.

Ms. Moore asked whether there has been coordination with the tenant of the Fireman's Union regarding access requirements to the road near the Kneass Building. Mr. Beaupre replied affirmatively and explained that they have expressed support for the concepts.

Ms. Moore also asked whether it was a requirement to provide a fence around the entire playground. It was explained that fences are required to keep adults out of playgrounds although there would be an effort to use landforms or planting rather than fences where possible.

Mr. Dramov asked for the approximate size of the area north of Building 49 not including the beach. It is approximately 60,000 square feet. Ms. Fonseca stated that the total lawn areas comprise approximately 1.4 acres.

Mr. Dramov asked about the bicycle and pedestrian continuity through the park. Mr. Beaupre explained that there would be various route options depending on the nature of the user. A recreational bicyclist may go through the park along the shoreline promenade while a commuter bicyclist would likely use the bike lanes on Illinois Street.

d. **Public Comment.** Ten members of the public made comments.

Larry Beard complimented the design team for accommodating the needs of the community and noted that it would be possible to get boats to the beach without conflicts with other uses.

Penny Wells, with Bay Access, Inc. and Bay Area Sea Kayakers, complimented the design team on the design of the northern park area, which she believes will serve non-motorized small boaters well. She believes the revised design addresses all of the citizens' concerns.

Janet Carpinelli, with the Dogpatch Neighborhood Association, believes that the design has come a long way. She noted four remaining issues: (1) the curve of 19th Street may bring more problems; the curve feels forced and maybe bringing 19th Street into the site is not needed; she had asked for an independent study on alignment of street from SFMTA but she had not received anything yet; (2) the Muni turnaround at 19th Street has not been addressed and may need to move further south; (3) she wants to know what the park will look like when the parcels around 20th Street are developed; and (4) she is concerned about lack of parking and where the boaters will park once they drop off their boats and wants to know whether there will be kayak storage available for rent.

Bo Barnes, with Bay Access, UCSF and Kayaks Unlimited, first complimented the design team and then asked whether there would be access for non-motorized small boats at night as kayakers would want to use the beach in order to launch for full moon paddles.

Paul Nixon, a member of the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Advisory Group, described himself as a swimmer, a cyclist and a boater. He believes that this will be a great place for kids to get in the water and splash around as the water quality is the same as Aquatic Park. He stated that the bicycle racks should be easy to lock to, which is not the case at Mission Bay.

Ralph Wilson, a member of the Central Waterfront Advisory Group, expressed his enthusiasm for the park and believes the park will be a great way for the community to experience the area's history. He supports the second Crane Plaza option as it provides a more graceful entry into the Slipway and will not require that the utility racks be cut.

Corinne Woods, a member of the Central Waterfront Advisory Group, is delighted to see the evolution of the park plan. She really prefers the direct at-grade access into the Slipway (Option 2 for Crane Plaza) and she likes the beach design. Her only concern is the location of the fence along Illinois Street as she believes it feels too constrained to remain in its current location. She would like the fence to be on the park-side rather than the street-side given the Muni turnaround in the street.

Topher Delaney, a local resident, complimented how the park designers have addressed past issues and concerns. She raised four concerns with the current design: (1) she is concerned with development of 650 Illinois Street, which will go to 68 feet with additional 38-foot-high elevator shafts, as the City Planning Department is not viewing Crane Cove Park as a park and therefore the shadow studies do not address shadows in the future park; (2) the Muni turnaround is very impactful as well as the ten-wheeler access at Illinois and 19th Streets and she is concerned that there are no images depicting these uses; (3) she believes the proposed placement of the playground blocks access from the Kneass Building and The Ramp Restaurant; the area has become “dog central” and any landscaped area will be used by dogs; and (4) she acknowledged that the left corner of Illinois and 19th Streets is a bit industrial but believes that we should “stay with history and keep the fence where it is” on the street-side of the sidewalk.

Joe Boss, a local resident, believes there is a problem with the 18th and 19th Streets Muni turnaround. He believes it is very important that the Pier 70 development be properly served by Muni and in order to accomplish this Muni should go down 18th Street, cross Illinois Street and the turnaround should occur within Pier 70.

Bonnie Bridges, an architect for The Ramp Restaurant, stated that the park designers have done a great job. She commented that she believes the two cranes should be paired with one another. She believes the playground weakens the design and separates areas. Rather there should be a place for play that is not a traditional playground.

e. **Board Discussion.** The Board and Committee members discussed the following:

Circulation. There should be a clear, identifiable design for the promenade; combine rectilinear and flowing approach to circulation to improve flow and remove sharp turns for bicyclists; placing the walkway inside the park on the other side of the historic fence is a positive move; look carefully at areas where uses cross, such as where boats are brought to shore across pedestrian and bicycle promenade.

Crane Plaza Options. Option 2 for Crane Plaza that allows direct access into Slipway is preferred as it provides universal access; it is more comfortable to have a flat surface for a plaza area, plaza should not follow street grade but rather be different from it and disappearing steps create a tripping hazard; the plaza area feels like a pinched point.

Beach. It's great news that you can have a beach; the beach is questionable within the industrial, historic setting.

Playground. Consider moving, maybe south of Building 49; maybe no play equipment is needed as there is “nothing better than water and sand for kids”; playground would create barrier between Kneass Building and shoreline; playground may diminish use of Kneass Building; would be better to avoid having a fenced play area and instead provide informal play; there has always been a strong advocacy for a children's play area so it should be accommodated.

Northern Area. Make this area more spacious and flexible; this area seems crowded; overlook at north is a great idea.

Native Gardens. There is no reason to create a mounding effect and rather this visual space should be kept as open as possible; the native gardens may limit visual and physical access; too much area may be given to this use and maybe native plants should rather be distributed throughout the site.

Slipway. The Slipway accommodated many great uses but it is hard to imagine going down in it now, it once operated in an industrial and functional manner but now it is negative rather than positive space; maybe the vertical edges of the cut could be used in some way for visual interest; the Slipway will be a big draw.

Muni Turnaround. This should be studied carefully by SFMTA and there should be a clear, mutual understanding of how it will function with the park.

Mix of Passive and Active Uses. The mix of uses is good although still compartmentalized, there may be opportunities for edges between uses to be softened.

Water Access. A floating dock is desired for ADA access and so people don't have to get wet.

Sea Level Rise. The design elevations look a bit low; finer sands will move less than coarser sands so may be more desirable to use finer sand; incorporating pockets of living shoreline should be considered.

f. **Board Summary and Conclusions.** The Board and Committee made the following summary and conclusions:

(1) Promenade along shoreline should be strong and there should be smooth and direct path connections throughout. The geometries should be simplified.

(2) Option 2 of Crane Plaza is preferred as universal access provided, although flatter plaza of Option 1 is more comfortable so a hybrid of these two approaches should be developed.

(3) There is concern that the playground creates a barrier and so other locations and approaches to play should be considered.

(4) The area north of Building 49 feels crowded and should be simplified.

(5) The mound in the native garden area should be reduced to lessen physical and visual barriers to the Bay. Natives should be distributed throughout the site.

(6) Explore incorporating small areas of living shoreline whenever possible, carefully consider the proposed sand grain size for the beach, and further consider how the site will be designed and graded to accommodate projected sea level rise.

g. **Project Proponent Response.** Mr. Beaupre made the following comments: a float will not be possible as it would cost more than one million dollars and in addition the Port has learned that beaches are the preferred access method into the water for most non-motorized small boat users; the beach will slope at less than 5% in order to provide universal access; the Muni turnaround has been set and is a critical component to the Central Subway; there will not be parking on the 19th Street extension although parking would be provided in Building 109; and the Port will consider alternatives for the playground and Crane Plaza.

4. **Benicia Waterfront Park, City of Benicia. (First Review)** The Design Review Board conducted a review of the proposed conceptual design for enhancements to the Benicia Waterfront Park, located in the City of Benicia, Solano County. The 16-acre park currently includes trails, a grass lawn, tidal and seasonal wetlands, and remnants of a historic railroad alignment through the area. Improvements to the park would include a new trail along the historic railroad alignment, a reconfigured First Street Green, wetland enhancements, and various park amenities such as public art, observation platforms, and seating areas.

a. **Staff Presentation.** Ellie Knecht introduced the project and the issues identified in the staff report.

b. **Project Presentation.** Vic Randall, with City of Benicia's Parks and Community Services, introduced those involved in the with project, described the project goals, and provided a brief history of the area. Mike Dotson, Rick Knight and Heather McLaughlin with the City of Benicia were also present at the meeting. David Early, with Placeworks, then provided a visual tour of the existing conditions, described the current use of the green, described the opportunities and constraints in the area, described the goals of the project, the community process to date and previous alternatives considered. Mr. Early described the preferred alternative in more detail including that the green would be raised by approximately three feet in elevation, restored wetland areas would be added at a ratio of two to one, new beach access would be provided and art is envisioned to be located throughout the park.

c. **Board Questions and Discussion.** The Board members asked a few questions and made a few statements.

Mr. Thompson asked to understand the anticipated effects of sea level rise more clearly.

Mr. Leventhal asked if there were any endangered species present in the marsh now to which it was responded that Salt Marsh Harvest Mice are present. Mr. Early explained that less than one-half acre of wetland would be removed and this would be replaced at a ratio of two to one.

Mr. Leventhal asked that the proposed edge of B Street be described in more detail. Mr. Early described where the cars would park, the location of a large culvert in this area and where the bio-swale would be located.

Mr. Kriken noted that while it is important to bring people to the waterfront, we have learned that it is not a good idea to bring people and dogs close to wetland areas due to negative impacts on wildlife.

Ms. McCann noted the views southwest across the strait are very important and should be highlighted. She further asked about how the train depot is used. It was explained that the Benicia Main Street Association currently has its offices and a small gift shop there now.

Mr. Strang asked for more information about the proposed condition of the edge along the wetland. Mr. Early explained that there would be a paved path and then light rip rap along the water's edge.

Mr. Thompson noted that the boardwalk would be considered as fill in the marsh and that there are many things that like to live in this riparian habitat that might be disturbed.

Mr. Leventhal asked how much space is needed for the car show in order to determine if the green could be made smaller. Mr. Early explained that the proposal adds 0.3 acres of new green area and that the car show will use all the space it can get.

Ms. Alschuler asked whether the project will provide for any protective measures against sea level rise. Mr. Early explained that a sea wall had been discussed in the community at one time although the height would be extreme and the water would just go around it so the current plan for the park improvements is to simply use resilient materials in the park construction.

Mr. Kriken asked to better understand the current recreational activities that occur in the area. Mr. Early explained that there is much passive recreation such as walking and biking and as it is often extremely windy, it is not comfortable to sit or be stationary at times. Non-motorized small boat use also occurs in the area.

d. **Public Comment.** There was one public comment.

Paul Nixon stated that he was speaking on behalf of Penny Wells with Bay Access, Inc. She would like for the existing non-motorized small boat access to be maintained as it is. Although she is aware that the City of Benicia has decided not to join the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail at this time, she explained that there are many kayakers and canoeists that use this area and would like for this to happen.

e. **Board Discussion.** The Board members discussed the following:

Ms. McCann suggested that the park design could be strengthened by pulling the original street grid into the park. She explained that the views south along Second Street would be strengthened by this move. She also expressed concern about the transition zone between the manicured green area and the wetland, noting that the transition seems too abrupt now and there should rather be a wider and more natural transition between these areas. She commented that while it is interesting to follow the old rail line with the proposed boardwalk, this alignment should be considered closely with the alignment of the existing street grid.

Ms. Alschuler stated that it will be important to better understand the proposed boardwalk at the next review as there appeared to be an oddly stepped pattern at the eastern end of the boardwalk. She acknowledged that this was likely due to the need to impact as little wetland area as possible but it would be much preferred if this were straightened.

Mr. Leventhal observed that the manicured green lawn areas of the park and the restored wetlands were "too neatly divided." He explained that many scientists and engineers, himself included, are closely studying transition zones in a study on "T-zones." The current theory is that rather than cutting to create a wetland it is preferred to fill in order to create a gentler and wider sloped transition zone between upland and wetland areas.

Ms. Alschuler mentioned that the shaping of the lawn area should be carefully considered and that the size of this lawn area should be reduced as much as possible.

Ms. McCann noted that "it is great to see a natural area so close to town." Mr. Thompson noted that this adjacency creates an opportunity for close natural stewardship of the area. Mr. Kriken further noted that the area provides a fantastic public education opportunity for both natural and cultural history.

Ms. Alschuler noted that there should be some thinking as to how art will be placed throughout the park.

f. **Board Summary and Conclusions.** The Board made the following summary and conclusions:

(1) The Northeast-Southwest grid of the adjacent streets should be extended into the park to strengthen views and physical connections to the park.

(2) The transition between the green and the wetland areas should be improved and the amount of lawn should be minimized. Creation of wetlands no longer involves just cutting but rather additional fill to create more usable transitional habitat.

(3) In order to accommodate future periodic flooding, there should be sufficient upland space to provide for interior drainage opportunities.

(4) The boardwalk should be straightened and the details of this looked at more closely.

(5) The Board would like to see more detailed design development drawings once these have been created.

6. **Adjournment.** Mr. Kriken adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

ELLEN MIRAMONTES
Bay Design Analyst